

Rahara 88 Degree East Foundation

Jan 2024

President's Desk

Our first Newsletter

Dear Patrons and foundation members,

It brings me immense joy to present our foundation's first newsletter edition, and through that, sharing with you all the achievements that we have been making with your constant support and encouragement. We have tried to keep you updated about our activities through our website, facebook page, and emails. However, we always wanted to publish our own newsletter, and through that, reach out to you all. I am happy that finally, we could make a start.

The Foundation started as a social initiative from a group of like-minded school friends who shared the urge to give back to the society. In 2019, we registered as a Society under West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961 (Registration number S0006348, 2019-20). We have since then got ourselves registered under 12AA and 80G. We now have our own office with full-time staff on the ground. As the new year dawns, we aspire to work harder to achieve our goals and start making a difference in the areas that we focus.

What we need the most at this juncture is the continued support from all our patrons and foundation members. Ever since we started our journey, each one of you have played a pivotal role in taking us forward. I extend my heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the Foundation. Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey.

Dr Manabendra Roy

Foundation President

“Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success.”

- Swami Vivekananda



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“Uttoron”

Shaping the Formative Years

Under the Uttoron initiative, we work with local authorities and supplement the education provided by Shishu Shiksha Kendras. Working closely with Block Development Offices and school authorities, we identify the sweet spot – something that the students need, and we can contribute effectively. The exact model varies from school to school: we either augment the staff where we engage full-time teachers taking classes during regular hours, or we supplement the teaching where evening classes are conducted by teachers engaged by us. Specific requirements from the students such as help with admission to high school, support (financial and academic) for appearing in competitive examinations are also addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Apart from engaging the students in their studies, the Foundation conducts cultural programs from time to time, and also invite parents to share their perspectives. Some of these interactions have been very effective in encouraging the parents to continue to send their wards to school, with a conviction that they are in safe hands. In particular, there is a general acknowledgement that our efforts have alleviated the need for arranging separate private tuition for the students. These are a few ways in which we believe we have started to make a difference.



Stationeries and dresses

We gift a goody bag comprising learning stationeries (bag, notebook, pen, pencil, eraser etc.) to the students at the beginning of the session. Also before Durga Puja, as part of the festivities, we hand over dresses to the students. We invite local dignitaries such as school principal and block development officers in these programs. Events such as this helps us interact with the communities and learn a lot about their needs and their thought processes.

Computer Lab – Rahara Mission

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” – Benjamin Franklin

We have been running a Computer Lab (and Spoken English) school at Rahara Mission for the benefit of the the Ashram students. Idea is to enhance their computer and spoken English proficiency, and prepare them for the next phase of their life. Usually, students from ninth and tenth standard join these classes that are held once or twice a week.

We recently concluded the class for one batch of students, and are in the process of handing over course certificates. We are grateful to the Mission authorities for their continuous support and co-operation.



Career Guidance

One of the original goals of this initiative was to provide career guidance to the students. Due to the pandemic and other distractions, we haven't been able to realize this goal. We hope to catch up on this during the current year.

“Galpogachha”

“There is no friend as ... a book” - Hemingway

A brain-child of one of our members, under the “Galpogachha” initiative, we try to encourage the students to read books – all sorts of books appropriate for their age group. The objective is to expose them to the whole new world, to foster growth and self-discovery. A small library, usually in the form of a book shelf stacked with colourful books, is set up within the school premise, with books donated by affectionate members, patrons and acquaintances.

In October 2023, our first Galpogachha was launched at Adibasipara Shishu Shiksha Kendra, Haringhata. The students really loved it. The teacher dedicates one hour every week within the class hours where the students read the books, or listen to the stories read by others. Some of them also chooses to draw or color drawing books during this period.



Donating Books

Members and patrons willing to donate books (including pre-used books in good condition) can drop a mail to our office email address. About the only requirement from our side is the books needs to be appropriate and interesting for the students (most of them in third or fourth grade, with Bengali being the only language they are comfortable with). Monetary help in setting up the library (mainly book shelves) can also be extended.

From the Project Coordinator's Diary

Visit to School

20-Jan-2024: Today we visited Mohanpur Shishu Shiksha Kendra, Budge budge, one of schools under "Uttoron". This was our first visit to the school since the beginning of the academic session. We carried school stationeries for the students such as note books and pencil boxes. Also as per prior discussion with the school teachers, we carried two large (12 ft x 18 ft) carpets. This particular school didn't have sufficient number of benches for the students, and it had become difficult for the students to sit on the floor during the hard winters.

Myself, along with the Foundation President, Secretary and two other Committee Members, started from Khardah around 8:30am, and reached the school by 10:00am. After exchange of

pleasantries, we set about arranging the carpets and organizing the class rooms. The teacher had prepared the students for a "show-and-tell" program, where the students recited poems and showcased what all they have been learning. It was really wholesome, and entertaining – the students were so adorable and full of energy.

Our President handed over the stationeries to the students. We briefly visited Bhetkakhali Shishu Shiksha Kendra as well, our other Uttoron center in Budge budge, before starting our return journey



Patron Visit

Our Project co-ordinator visits each Uttoron site every month. We usually plan a program in one of the centers once every two to three months. Goal is to stay connected with the schools, understand their requirements, and try to fulfill them. We would greatly appreciate if any of our patrons would like to join us in these visits: just send us an email and we will get in touch with you.

Secretary's Desk

We are into our fifth year!

Dear Friends,

The journey that started in 2019, has finally reached a stage where we feel we have started to make some differences in someone's life. Our Uttoron initiative is slowly scaling up. We are also planning to start a few health and wellness initiatives, in particular menstrual hygiene programs in a few schools.



When it comes to running the foundation, we have tried to prioritize two areas – one, be frugal (rationalize expenses, cut overheads), and two, ensure compliance (legal, regulatory, financial). We try to keep our processes simple yet efficient. In particular, all financial contributions are acknowledged through e-receipts around the tenth of the subsequent month (i.e. for contributions received in the month of December, e-receipts are sent around tenth of January). Also 10BE certificates for the financial year are issued during month of April of next financial year. Our audited financial statements are published on our website, alongwith Annual Meeting details, compliance and registration documents, and so on.

While we stay very closely connected with the foundation members, the same is probably not true with our patrons. This year, we hope to do better, and be more pro-active in communication, sharing our updates more often and seeking their views. We would also encourage all our patrons and members to reach out to us over email, and send us your suggestions and feedbacks. And do join us in one of our events, where we visit the schools, we assure you, it will be worth the time and effort.

With best regards,

Arindam Dhar

Foundation Secretary

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